Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims in this application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester, whose molecular weight has been highly increased by a chain-lengthening reaction of a ring-opening (co)polymer of glycolide or a mixture containing at least 70% by weight of glycolide and at most 30% by weight of another cyclic monomer with an oxazoline compound having at least two oxazoline ring structures in its molecule to the extent that ~~a ratio of increase in molecular weight represented by~~ a ratio (Mw_2/Mw_1) of a weight average molecular weight (Mw_2) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening to a weight average molecular weight (Mw_1) of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is ~~amounts to at least~~ 1.35 to 5.00,

wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening has a weight average molecular weight of at least 30,000 and is subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction to produce the high-molecular weight ring-opening (co)polymer, ~~and~~

wherein the weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening, whose molecular weight has been increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, is 150,000 to 500,000,

wherein a molecular weight distribution (Mw/Mn) represented by a ratio of a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer, whose molecular weight has been highly increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, to a number average molecular weight (Mn) thereof is 1.90 to 4.50, and

wherein a difference ($T_2 - T_1$) between a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening and a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_1 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is ~~at least~~ 5 to 30°C.

Claims 2-4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester according to claim 1, wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer has ~~having~~ a weight average molecular weight of 30,000 to 110,000 before the chain lengthening ~~is subjected to the chain lengthening reaction into a high molecular weight ring opening (co)polymer having a weight average molecular weight of at least 150,000 to 500,000~~.

Claim 6 (Canceled):

Claim 7 (Previously Amended): The high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester according to claim 1, wherein the 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening is at least 233°C.

Claims 8-9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester according to claim ~~9~~ 1, wherein the oxazoline compound having at least two oxazoline ring structures in its molecule is 2,2'-m-phenylene-bis(2-oxazoline).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A process for producing a high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester, which comprises subjecting a ring-opening (co)polymer of glycolide or a mixture containing at least 70% by weight of glycolide and at most 30% by weight of another cyclic monomer to a chain-lengthening reaction with an oxazoline compound having at least two oxazoline ring structures in its molecule to highly increase the molecular weight thereof to the extent that ~~a ratio of increase in molecular weight represented by~~ a ratio (Mw_2/Mw_1) of a weight average molecular weight (Mw_2) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening to a weight average molecular weight (Mw_1) of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening ~~amounts to at least~~ is 1.35 to 5.00,

wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening has a weight average molecular weight of at least 30,000 and is subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction to produce the high-molecular weight ring-opening (co)polymer, and

wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer and the oxazoline compound are subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction under conditions wherein the reaction temperature is not lower than the melting temperature of the ring-opening (co)polymer, but not higher than 300°C, and the reaction time is 10 to 30 minutes, ~~and~~ thereby obtaining a high-molecular weight ring-opening (co)polymer having the following properties:

a) the weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening, whose molecular weight has been increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, is 150,000 to 500,000,

b) a molecular weight distribution (Mw/Mn) represented by a ratio of a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer, whose molecular weight has been highly increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, to a number average molecular weight (Mn) thereof is 1.90 to 4.50, and

c) a difference ($T_2 - T_1$) between a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening and a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_1 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is ~~made at least~~ 5 to 30°C ~~by the chain-lengthening reaction~~.

Claims 12-16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Original): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the chain-lengthening reaction is conducted in the presence of the oxazoline compound in a proportion within a range of 0.005 to 10 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the ring-opening (co)polymer.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer has ~~having~~ a weight average molecular weight of 30,000 to 110,000 before the chain lengthening ~~is subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction~~

~~into a high molecular weight ring opening (co)polymer having a weight average molecular weight of 150,000~~.

Claims 19-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester according to claim ~~8~~ 11, wherein the molecular weight distribution (Mw/Mn) is at least 2.10.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester according to claim 1, wherein the difference ($T_2 - T_1$) is at least 15°C.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer and the oxazoline compound are subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction under conditions that the reaction temperature is not lower than the melting temperature of the ring-opening (co)polymer, but not higher than 280°C, and the reaction time is 10 to 30 minutes~~,~~.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening is ~~made~~ at least 233°C~~ by the chain lengthening reaction~~.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the difference ($T_2 - T_1$) is ~~made~~ at least 15°C ~~by the chain-lengthening reaction~~.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the chain-lengthening reaction is conducted in the presence of the oxazoline compound in a proportion within a range of 0.1 to 5 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the ring-opening (co)polymer.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim ~~20~~ 11, wherein the molecular weight distribution (Mw/Mn) is at least 2.10.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim ~~16~~ 11, wherein the oxazoline compound having at least two oxazoline ring structures in its molecule is 2,2'-m-phenylene-bis(2-oxazoline).